

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of providing a value stamp over a communication network, comprising:
~~providing a medium to a user having access to a data processing system, the medium being suitable for printing a value indicium thereon and having an identifier code that identifies the medium;~~
receiving from the a user via the communication network the an identifier code of the a medium to be used to purchase a value stamp, the medium being suitable for printing a value indicium thereon, the identifier code identifying the medium; and
accessing using the identifier code a database using the identifier code received from the user, the database including first and second identifier codes that are associated with first and second customer-relation-management (CRM) information, respectively; to decide whether or not to perform an action.
performing a specific action according to a result of the accessing step, wherein a first action associated with the first CRM information is performed if the identifier code received from the user corresponds to the first identifier code stored in the database and a second action associated with the second CRM information is performed if the identifier code received from the user corresponds to the second identifier code stored in the database, and
causing the value indicium to be printed on the medium to generate a value stamp.
2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, ~~further comprising: wherein~~
the first CRM information indicates that the medium is a medium that has been purchased by the user, the first task involving charging the cost of the medium to the user.
~~printing the value indicium on the medium to generate a value stamp.~~
3. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein the medium is a postage label sheet having a plurality of labels.

4. (original) The method of claim 3, wherein a plurality of value indicia are printed on the plurality of labels to generate a plurality of value stamps.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the first action ~~includes~~ involves determining whether an affiliate of a service provider requires an additional supply of the medium by examining the identifier code received from the user, wherein the affiliate is the user or a provider of the medium to the user, and wherein the service provider is an agent authorized to provide the value stamp to the user.

6. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~5~~ 1, the method further comprising:
generating new customer-relation-management (CRM) information at least for the identifier code of the medium;
storing the generated CRM information in a ~~the~~ database ~~system~~, wherein the database ~~system~~ includes CRM information corresponding to a plurality of media; and
retrieving the CRM information corresponding to the identifier code received from the user, wherein the retrieved CRM information is used to determine whether the affiliate requires the additional supply of the medium.

7. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein the value indicium is a postage indicium.

8. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein the identifier code is a label serial number or a sheet serial number and is used to authenticate the medium.

9. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein the identifier code enables one group of media to be differentiated from another group.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the first CRM information indicates that the medium is a medium that has been distributed as a free sample, the first action involving displaying a message asking the user if he or she wishes to obtain an

additional medium. ~~using the identifier code involves determining whether or not the action is required on the fly by examining the identifier code.~~

11. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the first action includes involves determining whether or not restocking of medium is needed by the user. ~~to allow the user to use the medium to purchase a value stamp over the network.~~

12. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the first action involves determining whether or not to allow the user to use the medium to purchase a value stamp over the network, ~~the method 11,~~ further comprising:

determining whether or not the medium has been previously purchased; and
if not purchased previously, requiring the user to purchase the medium or commit to purchasing a medium before allowing the user to use the medium to purchase the value stamp over the network.

13. (currently amended) A method of providing a value stamp over a communication network, comprising:

generating customer-relation-management (CRM) information corresponding to an identifier code of a medium to be distributed to a user, the medium being suitable for printing a value indicium thereon to produce a value stamp, the identifier code being suitable for distinguishing the medium from at least one other medium;

storing the generated CRM information in a database system, wherein the database system includes CRM information corresponding to a plurality of media;

providing the medium to a user having access to a data processing system;

receiving from the user over the network the identifier code of the medium to be used to purchase a value stamp; and

retrieving the CRM information corresponding to the identifier code; and performing a task associated with the CRM information.

14. (original) The method of claim 13, further comprising:

determining whether an affiliate of a service provider requires an additional supply of the medium upon examining the identifier code, wherein the affiliate is the user or a

provider of the medium to the user, and wherein the service provider is an agent authorized to provide the value stamp to the user.

15. (original) The method of claim 13, further comprising:
determining whether or not the medium has been previously purchased; and
if not purchased previously, requiring the user to purchase the medium before
allowing the user to use the medium to purchase the value stamp over the network.

16. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein the identifier code is
additionally used as a security feature of the medium to authenticate the medium.

17. (original) A method of providing a postage medium to a user for use in
purchasing a value stamp over a communication network, the method comprising:
generating customer-relation-management (CRM) information corresponding to a
serial number of a medium to be distributed to a user, the medium being suitable for printing a
value indicium thereon, the serial number uniquely identifying the medium;
storing the generated CRM information in a database system, wherein the
database system includes CRM information corresponding to a plurality of media;
providing the medium to a user having access to a data processing system;
receiving from the user over the network the serial number of the medium to be
used to purchase a postage stamp;
retrieving the CRM information corresponding to the serial number; and
determining whether an affiliate of a postage service provider requires an
additional supply of the medium upon examining the serial number, wherein the affiliate is the
user or a provider of postage medium to the user, and wherein the service provider is an agent
authorized to provide the postage stamp to the user.